3: Wolf F-5 (1959-1961) 1968 AD5 Taiwan Hokkien
Taiwan AD6

Since much of its growth took place during the fifty-odd years of Japanese administration, Taipei is weighted down with ugly though solid Japanese colonial architecture, studious imitations of public buildings in the British colonies. Current shoddy attempts at sinification make them even less attractive. In some of the more expensive residential neighborhoods there are still beautiful examples of Japanese domestic architecture hidden behind high brick walls. These residential streets, many of them unpaved and all bordered by open sewer ditches, are peaceful, the quiet disturbed only by an occasional car, a squeaking pedi-cab, and the varied, melodic calls of passing peddlers, knife-sharpeners, and shoe-repairers. At night the soft clack-clack of the blind masseur's bamboo rattle is as natural as a bird's song.

The streets in the business section of the city are anything but peaceful. The great clattering, rattling buses seem to have no springs and no speed limits; automobiles, mainly in the form of taxis or military jeeps, use horns more frequently than brakes. Sidewalks and roadways alike are clogged with bicycles, pedi-cabs, and pedestrians who reverse direction, cut across traffic, or come to a complete halt without warning or apparent reason. Cartloads of bricks and logs drawn by sweating, straining men or ambling yellow oxen use the same lanes as buses hurtling forward at forty miles an hour.

Beyond the hustling downtown districts that sell the essential luxuries to the wealthy are the Taiwanese sections of the city, areas of commerce and residence, often combined, that seem both flimsy and timeless. There is architecture here too, but it would take a coldly disciplined observer to look above the busy life in the shops and the streets to evaluate the style of the buildings. Here is the real texture of a Chinese city. There is poverty, but not the thin, sour smell of poverty in American cities. Tiny shops sell cheap, shoddy cotton goods, coarse household basketry, and thin metal pots and pans. The owners' wives squat in front, fanning portable stoves of clay and coal dust, cooking the evening meal of vegetables and pork fat or, depending upon the day's business, only vegetables. Customers step over and around the children sleeping or playing amid the merchandise and on the sidewalks; they bargain with the shopkeeper's wife while the baby tied on her back sleeps peacefully through their rising and falling voices. Few cars attempt the narrow lanes but pedi-cabs and bicycles thread in and around the pedestrians with a grace and speed that often ends in a squealing of brakes and shouted oaths. In the few arcades or

3:Wolf F-5 (1959-1961) 1968 AD5 Taiwan Hokkien
Taiwan AD6

and gaudy magazines. There is often an itinerant peddler or two during the afternoons, keeping up a steady stream of jokes and praise for his merchandise that would win approval from any sideshow barker. And evenings, particularly the warm, humid evenings of summer when houses are empty and life moves to the doorsteps and walkways, there are elaborate traveling medicine shows with magicians, or acrobats, or strongmen, or even modest operas. On those nights it is difficult to pass through the crowds, and the foreigner's white face isn't half as interesting as the antics going on under the bare electric light bulb that serves as the peddler's spotlight.

The remainder of the trip to Peihotien is on foot. There are always a few pedi-cabs by the station, but one ride in an aged pedi-cab down a rutted country path is sufficient to discourage a second. The walk across Tapu down its main street shouldn't take more than two or three minutes but it usually took me much longer. One side of the street is a roofed colonnade, protecting the shopper from the heat of the sun and the drenching of the rains. Here are the more substantial merchants of Tapu, the men who don't rent rickety stalls or push-carts but own or lease stores with sleeping rooms above or in the back for their families. Although there is a Western-style pharmacy in Tapu, as gaudy and cluttered as any American drug store, the old-fashioned Chinese medicine shop still does a better business. My husband often stopped there to talk with the druggist, an intelligent man who enjoys conversation, while I admired the rows of dignified crockery containers unsullied by advertising. Even on the hottest days the dim interior is cool and exotically fragrant. Next door is something that might be called a housewares store. From the open front to the dark, dusty back, the ceiling is festooned with the merchant's wares—bunches of brass tea kettles looking like giant clusters of pale grapes, chains of shallow, disc-shaped frying pans, strings of short-handled rice-stalk brooms, and ropes of household brushes. Stacked from floor to ceiling are baskets for straining, baskets for carrying, baskets for drying, baskets for fishing, baskets for storing. A shaky tower of pointed bamboo hats that serve the farmer as both umbrella and sunshade perch on an old wooden counter. Hanging from rusty nails are a collection of razor-sharp cleavers that function in the Chinese kitchen both as paring knife and butcher knife; there are dishes, cheap and easily broken; there are small tin cooking stoves that on careful examination prove to be ingeniously constructed of flattened beer

3:Wolf F-5 (1959-1961) 1968 AD5 Taiwan Hokkien
Taiwan AD6

cans salvaged from the garbage dumps of American military installations. In the next store a pall of dust hangs on everything. This is a small coal-kerosene-rice store, and the debris from the hand-operated rice polishing mill makes everything, even the black coal, a shade lighter. Toward the back there are baskets of charcoal and bundles of neatly cut twigs and branches, carefully graded and tied. Against the back wall are stacked bottles of wine and beer, their necks entwined with cheap handmade rope. The piquant, not quite fresh smell in the air comes from next door, the store we called the pickle shop for want of a better name. Huge jars of pickles—pickled cabbage, pickled radishes, pickled eggplants, even pickled eggs—fill the front of the store, the more expensive delicacies displayed in glass jars, the more routine in heavy, waist-high earthenware crocks. Only a few are preserved in vinegar. Most are salted and allowed to season for several months, or dried in the hot, baking summer sun, or soaked in soy sauce, herbs, or wine. The unlighted rear of the store is brightened somewhat by the gaudy labels on a few shelves of canned foods. They are expensive, not as tasty as the local product, and often dangerous with age and contamination. Nearer the front are the precious tins of powdered milk, a mother's only solution to a dry breast in this damp climate where dairy cows quickly succumb to tuberculosis.

The heart of the town, or at least the source of the greatest commotion each forenoon, is the roofed food market. The market would be difficult to locate were it not for the overflow of shoppers and farmers. The entrance is little more than a narrow alley between two store-fronts, an alley made even narrower by the half dozen farmers squatting there amid their baskets of produce. These are men who can't afford to rent stalls under the protection of the roof or farmers who happen that day to have some surplus vegetables or a sudden shortage of cash. Just a few steps down the alley is the open market shed itself and what seems to be a disorganized profusion of produce heaped on trays, piled in baskets, spread on tables, or simply stacked on the bare packed earth: fresh onions, cucumbers, garlic, an infinite variety of melons and squash, eggplants, bamboo shoots, and occasionally fresh mushrooms brought in by some enterprising merchant with Taipei contacts. Scattered between and on top of the vegetables are bananas, papayas, pineapples, guavas, and a few precious apples imported from Japan. Adding a sinister note to the confusion of produce are the meatstalls with carcasses of pigs hanging on huge hooks,

3:Wolf F-5 (1959-1961) 1968 AD5 -Taiwan Hokkien
Taiwan AD6

great hunks of snowy fat (the poor man's meat), buckets of blood and entrails. The fish stalls, less gory and less colorful, abound with local river fish and a few ocean fish brought in on the early train, some swimming in buckets, others gutted but missing no eyes—a great delicacy, or tails—a matter of aesthetics. And everywhere there are chickens, ducks, geese, both live and dead. The smells to a foreign nose are sometimes exhilirating, sometimes appalling; the sounds are bewildering. The day's fowl quack, cluck, and honk their distress; above their protest the voices of customers and merchants rise and fall. The din of heated bargaining blends a variety of languages. The farmers speak either Hokkien or Hakka, the native Chinese dialects of the island; a few merchants and their friends converse in Japanese; policemen and soldiers prefer Mandarin, the official language.

Away from the uproar of the market, Tapu's streets seem relatively calm. The paved main street ends at the canal, an irrigation ditch civilized by concrete banks for its passage through town. In several places, steps that lead into the canal end in small platforms where the storekeepers' wives and daughters can do their laundry while keeping an eye on the store. There are more shops on both sides of the canal: a small bookstore, a tailor, a fabric and ready-made clothing store, a photographer, and a paper store that supplies school children with copy books and pencils, and adults with the paraphernalia of worship—metal wires dipped in incense and bundles of spirit money burned to provide for the deceased. One of my favorite shops is that of the *beidz*-maker who fills the air with a lively rhythmic chwing-chwing sound as he fluffs cotton into puffy battings for warm winter comforters. A little farther down the street a noodle-maker is usually at work. He suspends strips of dough between pegged poles which he gradually moves farther and farther apart as the noodles stretch and dry. Just beyond the noodle-maker is a small, paved square, formed where the canal goes underground. This is the site of a shrine dedicated to Tu Ti Kung, the lowest ranking god in the Chinese supernatural bureaucracy. Tu Ti Kung serves his celestial superiors as the official recorder of the activities of the living. In the country, he is the guardian of the land and the god of agriculture; in the town, he is considered a patron of business and a god of wealth. The responsibility for burning incense at his shrine each morning rotates among the families residing in his district.

3:Wolf F-5 (1959-1961) 1968 AD5 Taiwan Hokkien
Taiwan AD6

Across the square a narrow, unpaved alley twists past a coffin shop, smelling incongruously fresh and spring-like from the fragrant sandalwood; it makes another turn at the legless fortune teller's shop, passes a few houses, and abruptly disappears in the open, shimmering rice paddies.

3: Wolf F-5 (1959-1961) 1968 AD5 Taiwan Hokkien AD5
Peihotien

because they were afraid it was dangerous, but Old Tan wouldn't let them because he thinks it's his son."

The children have heard this story many times but it no more prevents them from spending long afternoons playing under the tree than the ghost in the pig pen prevents them from hiding there when their mothers are searching for them.

For the children, the women, and a good many of the men, the significant dimensions of the world are the thirty-five or forty brick buildings of Peihotien. With the dramatic increase in population on Taiwan, one corner of a neighboring village now lies just across a paddy field from Peihotien. Yet a woman in search of a moment's chat or a few slices of ginger would rather walk further, within the boundaries of Peihotien, than step across the paddy field to the nearby village. The children of the neighboring villages all go to the same school, but their after-school play groups are composed of village mates—even if they must fill out a team with underaged siblings. A farmer's small plots of land may be scattered among those of farmers from several villages, but in the evening when he is puzzling out a new directory from the Farmer's Association or worrying about the market prices, he does it with the men of Peihotien who may work fields a mile in the opposite direction from his own.

There are several places in the village where groups of adults may be found gossiping or working together at various times of the day. On warm summer evenings the men often fill their rice bowls and retire to the doorstep to eat and chat with a neighbor similarly occupied. A group of families usually share a well and hand pump, and two or three women are there at almost any hour washing out a few clothes not worth carrying all the way to the river, rinsing off a dirty child, or preparing vegetables for the evening meal. The women who live near the irrigation ditch that skirts one edge of the village often gather by the little bridge to clean out a clumsy kettle or rinse out some diapers. A concrete platform on one side of the bridge makes it a popular cooling-off place for children who do not dare go into the river and aren't allowed to play in the precious well water.

For adults the most frequent informal gatherings occur in the three shops of the village. Two of the shops are so small that it takes a practiced eye to identify them. On the square behind the house in which we lived, a family sells cigarettes, matches, a few candies, toilet paper, and similar small items. Here, probably because the family

3:Wolf F-5 (1959-1961) 1968 AD5 Taiwan Hokkien AD5
Peihotien

517 444 [883] includes some lively teen-agers, is where the older adolescents of the village gather. At the opposite end of the village in a shed that seems in imminent danger of blowing away is a candy store run by a woman with too many children to go out to work and too little money to stay home. The women who come to buy candy to quiet their crying children often sit down on the bench in front of the store to pass the time of day with Mrs. Lim, the proprietress.

444 [438] The main store and the one most easily identified as a store is located in the center of the village. The candy and cookie collection is more elaborate, and rice, cooking oil, fuel, spices, and a few other essentials can be obtained here at prices only slightly higher than in Tapu. For many years there was no store at all in Peihotien, but according to Ng Kok-hua, the proprietor, our landlord's older brother talked him into fitting out an unused storage wing of his house as a shop. Very little of Mr. Ng's present good fortune comes from the store, but he still keeps it 444 open and probably makes some profit from it. Unfortunately, the bane 426 of a village storekeeper is trying to refuse credit to his neighbors and, 521 when this inevitably fails, trying to collect what he is owed. Occasionally Mr. Ng loses his temper and curses his debtors loudly and publicly. This rarely adds to his income but it does entertain the loungers resting on his benches. One day when Mr. Ng was trying to collect a bad debt from a neighbor who is also a distant relative, I jotted down the highlights of the discussion. Mr. Ng's wife who tends the store most of the time and takes the brunt of her husband's temper was also there. Mr. Ng was saying angrily to his wife, "You think that everyone is of good heart and just give things to them."

Mrs. Ng, looking anxiously at her husband's rising color, answered, "Well, they said they would give me the money after they sold the pig. How could I know that they wouldn't give it to me?"

Mr. Ng gave his wife a look of utter scorn and, turning his attention to the hapless debtor, a Mrs. Lim, he continued, "You all come here and get things and don't give me any money, but when I go buy all these things I have to give money. How can I go along like this? I have to go and borrow money so that I can buy things for the store!"

Some of the on-lookers exchanged skeptical glances over this statement. Mr. Ng did not seem to notice and warmed to his subject. "How can I borrow money and then lend it to other people? That's what it amounts to. And that is no way to do business."

3:Wolf F-5 (1959-1961) 1968 AD5 Taiwan Hokkien AD5
Peihotien

Mrs. Lim answered, soothingly, "Now, Ng, your temper is thin, but my son is not a bad person. It is just that we have no money. The money we got from the pig had to go to people we borrowed money from and we still owe them more money. My poor son is the only one earning money in our family and he has to feed us all. We have to borrow a little each month just to have enough to eat. He only makes NT$700* a month and you can't feed six people on that."

Several of the loungers began at this point to calculate just how much money would be needed to feed a family the size of Mrs. Lim's, and the consensus of opinion was that her son's income was indeed not up to the job. Mr. Ng did not join in these interesting calculations but continued to rub his head and make frustrated comments about the store, debtors, fate, etc. He finally growled at the group in general, "Oh, this store! This store! This store just can't give people food if they don't give it money!"

Mrs. Lim smiled at him sympathetically, and said, "Well, if you had a store in the city, you could do things that way, but not in the country. In the country you have to let people have things whether they have money or not. I know it is hard on you, but you just have to do it that way."

Several members of the group agreed with Mrs. Lim and informed Mr. Ng of it. Mr. Ng began to get red in the face again and spoke very loudly to Mrs. Lim. "You calculate how much interest it would cost you if you borrowed two thousand dollars a year. You just see how much interest that would be every month. Now, I don't charge you a single bit of interest, do I? Do I?"

Mrs. Lim looked genuinely horrified at the thought and readily agreed that he did not charge interest. Mr. Ng continued, "So now all I want is my money. You just give me the money and not the interest—just the money so that I can go buy more things for my store. When you go home, you tell that son of yours to bring me my money and I will be happy. I don't care if you never buy anything from me again, but I want my money. I won't say anything about that stupid nephew of yours who has three people in the family that are working and still comes and buys on credit and never pays me back."

* At this time the exchange rate for New Taiwan dollars (NT$) was about forty to one United States dollar. For a village family of two adults and two children approximately NT$800 would provide an average living, with very few luxuries.

3:Wolf F-5 (1959-1961) 1968 AD5 Taiwan Hokkien AD5
Peihotien

444 This seemed to lead Mr. Ng to think of all the others who had 426 debts with him and he listed them and their debts and their incomes 521 and their ancestors, all in an unsavory light. He ended with a dramatic wail, "Everyone wants to eat me—who am I supposed to eat?" and disappeared into the back of the store. Before the crowd had a chance to move off though, he called out to his wife in a fine stage voice, "Old woman! From now on don't you give anything to anybody without seeing their money."

444 The women sitting on the benches chatted for a while longer and 426 even though some of them were on Mr. Ng's list, they were generally 602 sympathetic to the plight of the country storekeeper. One woman 571 summed it up nicely: "It really is hard to run a country store if you 369 don't have a lot of money because all of your neighbors that you have known for generations and all of your relatives come and want things when they don't have any money, and so you just have to give them the things. Sometimes you know that if you give things to this person, he will never give you the money, and so you tell him this, and then he gets mad and says that you don't respect him and goes all around to people saying you have insulted his family. If you don't give things to people, they get mad at you, but if you do, you can't make any money. It really is hard to run a store in the country."

562 In the past, a village woman who was deeply dissatisfied
882 may have remained at home because there were few reasonable
869 alternatives whereas now she can go to the city and work in a factory. Knowledge of this opportunity undoubtedly is a threat enforcing better treatment of younger women.

294 There are other minor sources of income. One vil-
463 lage woman has become a seamstress recently in competition
[434] with women in the town of Hsin Tien and Pouti as well as some in the nearby villages of Erhlei and T'oulei. Her business has been so good that within six months, she purchased another sewing machine and hired a young girl to train as an assistant.

464 Occasionally, one of the tomb builders will hire a number of villagers to clear a piece of land or help dig a tomb. During certain seasons, people will be employed temporarily in a variety of jobs. For example, during the winter, there are occasional opportunities to get a day's labor as an aide on a coal delivery truck. In the summer a village girl sells shaved ice in front of the temple.

444 Not minor in terms of income but minor in terms of numbers are the two village stores, each a family enterprise. The one which presently enjoys the greatest share of the business is run by an older influential leader surnamed Liao who is chairman of the permanent temple committee. The newer store which is run by a Chiu family who have only lived in the village forty years has a smaller

• 444 share of the business but is growing most rapidly because of progressive policies, i.e., it has the only freezer and recently added a television set for customer enjoyment (it faces the street).

464 There have been migrants from the village to the
369 city, usually Taipei, over an extended periof of time.
166 Although the village population is about 50% larger than
[161] it was 25 years previously, the growth has not encompassed the high rate of natural increase. All three village residents who went beyond elementary school are working in offices and living in the city. The daughter and son of the man with the large tea farm graduated from junior high and senior high respectively and both now work in a bank. The remaining boy graduated from junior high and a business school and works as a bookkeeper and biller in a Hsin Tien store. Two village men started a Taipei meat canning business in the early nineteen-thirties and enjoyed considerable financial success and although living in Taipei, they continue to participate in village affairs and help support the village temple and moreover, they have hired many people with Talei Li origins in their meat factory.

City residents return often to the village both for the special occasions and on their off days merely to walk around, visit, and chat. Their homes and contacts in the city help to make the transition to the city easier for a